



U.S. Department of Justice

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FREEPORT MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGAL DISTRIBUTION OF COCAINE

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; RICHARD W. SANDERS, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration; THOMAS J. KNEIR, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; LARRY G. TRENT, Director of the Illinois State Police; DAVID SNYDERS, Stephenson County Sheriff; and JERRY WHITMORE, Chief of the Freeport Police Department, today made the following announcement:

GARY L. HOWARD, 26 (DOB: 03/31/77), of 47 South Hancock, Freeport, Illinois, pled guilty today in Rockford federal court to illegally distributing "crack" cocaine.

In pleading guilty, Howard admitted that on June 27, 2003, he knowingly and intentionally sold an individual, who was actually an undercover agent, 87.1 grams of crack cocaine. Specifically, Howard admitted that he met with the undercover agent in front of an auto repair business in Freeport, Illinois. Howard admitted that during that meeting he discussed selling the undercover agent 3 ounces of crack cocaine. Howard admitted to giving the undercover agent 80.8 grams of crack cocaine. Since the crack cocaine Howard gave the agent did not weigh 3 ounces, Howard told the agent that he would return with another quarter ounce. Howard left and returned approximately five minutes later and gave the undercover agent a plastic bag containing an additional 6.3 grams of crack cocaine.

Sentencing for Howard is scheduled for July 2, 2004, at 9:30 a.m. Howard faces a maximum potential sentence of life in prison, a fine of up to \$4,000,000, a term of supervised release of at least five years following imprisonment and up to life, and any restitution ordered by the court. The actual sentence will be determined by a United States District Court Judge, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by Rockford offices of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Freeport Police Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

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